United Nations E/C.19/2005/4/Add.13

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
28 March 2005

Original: English

Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues
Fourth session
New York, 16-27 May 2005
Item 3 of the provisional agenda*
Special theme: Millennium Development Goals and indigenous peoples

Information received from the United Nations system

Note by the Secretariat

Addendum

Indigenous peoples and the Millennium Development Goals**,***

Summary

In the present paper the author provides a comprehensive analysis of the situation of indigenous peoples and the achievement of Millennium Development Goals 1 and 2 through case studies in several countries around the world. She explains that, since indigenous peoples are invisible in the process of defining the Millennium Development Goals, their perspectives should be included in the review of Millennium Development Goal implementation, so that the achievement of Millennium Development Goals would not exacerbate poverty among indigenous peoples. The author highlights the importance of respecting indigenous concepts of development and taking into account indigenous identity and cultures in development. She also points out that the rights-based approach should be central in the development process. Recommendations appear at the end of the paper. A bibliography provided by the author is available with the Secretariat.

* E/C.19/2005/1.
** The present document was submitted late to ensure the inclusion of the most recent information.
*** Prepared by Victoria Tauli Corpuz, member of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues.

05-28564 (E) 220405

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I. Introduction

1. If the Millennium Development Goals are met there is no doubt that some effects will trickle down to some of the world's 350 million indigenous peoples, the majority of whom live in poverty. The question remains whether Governments, the international community, civil society, indigenous peoples and the private sector can achieve these goals. It could happen that indigenous peoples become the sacrificial lambs for the reduction of poverty through development projects that will displace them from their lands. Framing the Millennium Development Goals as a human rights-based agenda is therefore essential. For indigenous peoples it is difficult to talk about development without talking about basic rights to lands and resources, culture and identity and self-determination. At the same time, some Governments and even intergovernmental organizations question the wisdom of targeting indigenous peoples as a specific beneficiary group for development.

2. Indigenous peoples are invisible in the Millennium Development Goals. A review of the Millennium Development Goals in some countries shows that they are not even mentioned or referred to. In this context, it may be worthwhile to explore how to make the Millennium Development Goals relevant to indigenous peoples and, in the process, discuss more comprehensively indigenous peoples' development.

II. Development aggression

3. The term "development" has acquired a negative connotation for indigenous peoples even if this is called "sustainable", because their histories are replete with traumatic experiences with development projects, policies and programmes. In fact, mainstream development is regarded as one of the root causes of their problems. If the Millennium Development Goals reinforce this paradigm instead of challenging it there is little hope that the Millennium Development Goals can really bring positive changes for indigenous peoples.

4. "Development aggression"[1] refers to the imposition of so-called development projects and policies without the free, prior and informed consent of those affected, under the rubric of modernization or nation-building. This process can lead to destruction or loss of ancestral territories and resources, denigration of indigenous worldviews and values and of their political, economic and socio-cultural systems and institutions, ecosystem degradation, displacement, and violent conflicts. This is often associated with large-scale commercial extraction of minerals, oil and gas, logging, biodiversity, building of mega-hydroelectric dams, highways, chemical-intensive agriculture, industrial forest plantations, designating environmentally protected areas that encroach upon indigenous peoples' lands, among others. Sectoral loans from international financial institutions, such as education sector loans that are primarily used to perpetuate the dominant development paradigm and the modernization agenda, can also be considered development aggression.

5. Systemic changes and policy reforms are required for the Millennium Development Goals to make a difference in the daily lives of indigenous peoples. In the face of the negative experiences of indigenous peoples with nation-State building and mainstream development, they built up their own distinct movements, which helped bring about policy changes. They pushed for constitutional

amendments and legal reforms that recognize indigenous identity and rights. In some countries there are policy shifts away from paternalistic approaches, which regard indigenous peoples as primitive or vulnerable sectors who will benefit from modernization and integration into the dominant society. More emphasis is given on the right of indigenous peoples to preserve their cultural values and institutions and exercise more control over their own development. Unfortunately, in most countries, this is more the exception than the rule. More substantial structural changes are still needed to change discriminatory and oppressive structures, laws and policies.

6. Protection and mitigation of the adverse impacts of development are not enough for indigenous peoples, who did not seek such projects in the first place. The need to obtain their free, prior and informed consent before policies affecting them are formulated or before projects are brought into their communities is slowly gaining recognition. There are now evolving concepts and concrete proposals from indigenous peoples in relation to development. These come under different labels such as "self-development", "ethno-development", "development with identity", "autonomous development" and "life projects".

III. Poverty situation of indigenous peoples

7. The little research that has been done indicates that generally indigenous peoples are disproportionately represented among the poorest of the poor in both developed and developing countries. The World Bank study on indigenous peoples and poverty in Latin America concluded that "poverty among Latin America's indigenous population is pervasive and severe".[2] One conclusion is that the poverty map in the region coincides with indigenous peoples' territories.

8. A subsequent study in the region conducted by the Inter-American Development Bank[3] came up with similar conclusions and observations,

> "By conventional socioeconomic indicators, whether based on income data or on concepts of unsatisfied basic needs, indigenous peoples as an ethnic group are represented disproportionately among both the poor and the extreme poor. Moreover, with very few exceptions, the indications are that this trend has been worsening over the past decade or so ... This is mainly rural poverty, given that despite recent demographic and occupational trends the vast majority of indigenous peoples are still concentrated in rural areas. But there is also new urban poverty confronting indigenous peoples, with evidence that extreme poverty once again affects them disproportionately as an ethnic group."

9. A report on Mexico says that the indigenous peoples live in "alarming conditions of extreme poverty and marginality". This study observed that being poor and being indigenous are synonymous. "Virtually all of the indigenous people living in municipalities with 90 per cent or more indigenous people are catalogued as extremely poor."[4] Statistics in Guatemala show that 50 to 60 per cent of a total population of 11 million persons belong to 23 indigenous peoples.[5] Fifty-four point three per cent of them are poor and 22.8 per cent extremely poor. Sixty per cent of households do not have the capacity to earn half of the cost of their minimum food needs despite spending a greater part of their earnings on it.[6] In Ecuador's rural population, of which 90 per cent are indigenous, almost all are living in extreme poverty.[7] Eight out of every ten indigenous children in this country live in poverty

according to the indicators published in the 2001 Human Development Report. In terms of how indigenous poverty compares with the non-indigenous populations, the UNICEF Latin America and Caribbean office shows that in Guatemala, 87 per cent of the indigenous population is poor, as compared to 54 per cent of the non-indigenous population; in Mexico, that ratio is 80 per cent vs. 18 per cent; in Peru, 79 per cent of the indigenous population is classified as poor, compared to 50 per cent of the non-indigenous population; while in Bolivia, the ratio is 64 per cent vs. 48 per cent.[8]

10. The Asian Development Bank also undertook a study in 2002 on the poverty situation of indigenous peoples and ethnic minorities in Viet Nam, the Philippines, Cambodia and Indonesia. This study could not establish trends in the relationship between poverty and ethnicity, because there is a lack of disaggregated and data based on ethnicity. However, in the case of Viet Nam, such disaggregated data is available. The finding is that the worst poverty situation in Viet Nam is among the ethnic minorities[9] who live in the Highland areas of Northern and Central Viet Nam. This study cited 1998 data from the Institute for Economic Survey which says that ethnic minorities accounted for 28 per cent of poor people in the nation, while they compose 14 per cent of the total population.[10] The Philippine study concluded that there was no substantial improvement in the economic condition of indigenous peoples in the Philippines between 1988 and 1997.[11]

11. In spite of the fact that indigenous peoples' traditional livelihood systems, such as owner-tiller small farm agriculture, swidden or shifting agriculture, hunting and gathering, and pastoralism, sustained them through centuries, these were regarded by modern economic thinkers as inefficient and backward. The integration and assimilation of indigenous peoples into the market economy and the dominant society has been the solution adopted by most Governments. Such approaches have led to the conversion of their lands into commercial monocrop agriculture and forest plantations, mines, export processing zones or dumping sites for nuclear wastes. Cash crop production took place in massive scales, not only in Central America but also in Asia and Africa. The impacts of this on indigenous peoples in Central America, as described below by the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) study, applies to other regions as well:

> "From an indigenous perspective, the situation appears to have been particularly serious in those countries where the development of cash crops for export (such as coffee) led to demands for indigenous labour as well as to pressure on their lands. In Guatemala and parts of Mexico, where the coffee economy grew particularly rapidly at this time, indigenous peoples lost much of their communal lands. Many became resident workers (colonos) on the coffee plantations; and in the Guatemalan highlands, where the indigenous population was now mainly concentrated, farm plots rapidly became too small to provide for a subsistence income. Regular periods of migrant labor to the large agricultural plantations became part of the Guatemalan Indian's life. Until the 1940s, coercive debt-bondage and vagrancy laws compelled indigenous peasants to provide seasonal estate labor; since that time, with most indigenous lands unable to provide a subsistence income, market forces have been enough to provide the migrant and seasonal labor in commercial agriculture."[12]

IV. Structural causes of indigenous peoples' poverty

12. Poverty amidst indigenous peoples finds its roots in colonization, the destruction of indigenous economic and socio-political systems, continuing systemic racism and discrimination, social exclusion, and the non-recognition of indigenous peoples' individual and collective rights. In several countries indigenous peoples were part of the pre-independence liberation movements and fought side by side with others against the colonizers. Yet, when the nation-States came into being, they, in turn, perpetuated internal colonization.

13. Indigenous peoples felt betrayed by nation-States, when they saw that the autonomy and local sovereignty that their ancestors fought and died for has been violated by the new rulers.[13] Legal, political, economic and cultural systems in the European mould were put into place that ignored or contradicted pre-existing social, political and cultural systems that indigenous peoples had developed to govern themselves and to govern their relations with nature and their neighbours. Doctrines and laws used by the colonizers such as *terra nullius*[14] or the Regalian Doctrine,[15] which disenfranchised indigenous peoples of their territories and resources, were invoked by new nation-States. Indigenous socio-cultural and political systems, which were seen as barriers to the entrenchment of colonial rule or perpetuation of State hegemony, were illegalized or destroyed. These were the factors that led indigenous peoples to continue their ancestors' struggles to maintain their pre-colonial self-determining status as peoples and nations.

14. Structural inequities and inequalities were further reinforced by the legislation of discriminatory and oppressive land laws that ignored indigenous peoples' customary land tenure systems and laws. Natural resource management laws of Governments contradicted indigenous sustainable natural resource management practices. Pervasive paternalism, development aggression and government neglect in providing social services to indigenous peoples all contributed to chronic poverty among indigenous peoples. Indigenous territories were mainly regarded as resource-base areas and it was the sole prerogative of the nation-State to decide how to exploit these resources.

15. The debt burden, undoubtedly, is a major factor for the exacerbation of indigenous peoples' poverty. To generate foreign exchange to pay for foreign debts, Governments rely upon massive extraction of natural resources for export. In many countries, indigenous peoples' territories are the last frontiers where such resources are found, because many indigenous peoples protected their territories from being plundered by colonizers and even by post-colonial Governments.

16. Structural adjustment packages tied to foreign loans made basic social services even more inaccessible for indigenous peoples. Governments spending most of their budgets to service local and foreign debt have problems providing basic services to their majority urban populations. Providing social services to indigenous peoples in remote areas gets an even lower priority.

17. Mineral, oil and gas extraction is carried out in many indigenous territories to generate income to pay back debts. The situation in Ecuador as described below is a classic illustration of the links between the debt problem, extractive industries and indigenous poverty.

> "Despite the knowledge of contamination in the Oriente, the Ecuadorian Government has continuously advocated the mining of petroleum in the Oriente with absolute disregard to the interests of the indigenous peoples. There is a prevailing hope that oil production will help stabilize the economy and eventually be a key component in the reduction of the national debt. Notwithstanding the fact that the national debt has risen from two hundred million dollars in 1970 to over sixteen billion in 1998, the Ecuadorian Government continuously favors the interests of foreign companies over its own indigenous citizens. This dependence on foreign investors leaves Ecuador's economy vulnerable to the fluctuating prices of oil, which is responsible for forty per cent of the national income yearly. With such a large portion of their economy based upon such a fluctuating industry, the results have been fairly disastrous for the people and the poverty rate in Ecuador. The poverty rate, which was at an overwhelming level of fifty per cent in 1975, reached the appalling rate of sixty-five per cent in 1992. Without a set of well-monitored regulations concerning the extraction of oil in the Oriente, Ecuador is leaving itself open to the possibility of continued environmental destruction and human rights violations."[16]

18. The debt trap has condemned debtor countries to poverty. Unless there is a political will to have strong and effective solutions, such as debt forgiveness and debt arbitration, it is difficult to imagine how such countries can ever get out of poverty. The Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative and the development of Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) are some of the international community's responses to the debt problem. Indigenous peoples belonging to PRSP countries attest that they have never been involved in drawing them up nor were their concerns reflected in any satisfactory way. The PRSPs, in fact, are seen by some indigenous peoples and civil society organizations as recycled structural adjustment policies.

19. The approach taken by a country to cut by half the number of poor and hungry people by 2015 will determine whether indigenous peoples' poverty will be alleviated or not. The path of incurring more debts, engaging in more aggressive extraction of mineral resources, oil, or gas in indigenous peoples' territories, or further liberalizing imports to the detriment of traditional livelihoods, would not alleviate poverty among indigenous peoples.

V. Poverty and poverty indicators seen through an indigenous lens

20. Concerns about the definition of poverty and about poverty indicators have been raised by indigenous peoples. Poverty is generally defined in terms of income and consumption and is constructed around cash incomes and food expenditures within a market and cash-based economic setting. These are parameters that do not adequately reflect the realities of many indigenous peoples. Important non-income indicators of poverty include the lack of voice or power in political and bureaucratic systems, the non-recognition of the collective rights of indigenous peoples, and their lack of access to basic infrastructure and social services. While there is an increasing number of indigenous people engaged with the market economy, the majority are still mainly in subsistence production. Thus, the $1 indicator does not

make much sense for people who do not sell their labour or who spend little time producing for the market.

21. It is clear that the poverty situation of indigenous peoples is a relational phenomena. Some are rich because others are poor. Furthermore, as stressed in the earlier sections, the poverty situation of others may be alleviated, but this may mean further poverty for indigenous peoples. Furthermore, poverty, especially for indigenous peoples, is a collective phenomenon with historical and structural causes and, therefore, this cannot simply be dealt with on an individual level. Poverty should be addressed through a human rights-based approach and in particular through the recognition of collective human rights.

22. The need for data disaggregation to understand better the particular situations of indigenous peoples cannot be overemphasized. The *Human Development Report*, in its issues from 1994 to 1998, stressed that it is important to disaggregate the human development indicators on the basis of factors such as gender, race and ethnicity, and geography in order to portray more accurately and act appropriately in response to such indicators.[17] If the indigenous peoples' situations are accurately reflected in the Report, the ranking of countries with indigenous peoples in the Human Development Index (HDI) goes down. In the 1996 Report, for example, Mexico ranked forty-eighth among 120 countries. If the country's indigenous populations, however, are excluded from the results it will end up ranking twenty-ninth. Bolivia and Guatemala, countries with indigenous peoples composing 50 per cent or more of the total population, are found in the lowest ranks, Bolivia 111, Guatemala 112. Peru, which has a large percentage of indigenous peoples, is ranked 91. The 2004 *Human Development Report* concluded that indigenous peoples are more likely to be poor than non-indigenous peoples. It further said that in many countries, public spending in basic social services "systematically discriminates against minorities and indigenous peoples."[18]

23. Data disaggregation was one of the recommendations that emerged from the first and second sessions of the Permanent Forum. A workshop on this was held and one of the recommendations says that:

> "Indigenous peoples should fully participate as equal partners, in all stages of data collection, including planning, implementing, analyzing and dissemination, access and return, with appropriate resourcing and capacity building to do so. Data collection must respond to the priorities and aims of the indigenous communities themselves. Participation of indigenous communities in the conceptualization, implementation, reporting, analysis and dissemination of data collected is crucial, both at the country and international levels. Indigenous peoples should be trained and employed by data collecting institutions at national and international levels. The process of data collection is critical for the empowerment of the communities and for identifying their needs."[19]

VI. Conflict of paradigms

24. In countries where economic growth rates are increasing, the situation for indigenous peoples has not necessarily changed for the better. In fact, for many countries whose economic growth has been spurred by massive extraction of natural resources and the building of giant hydroelectric dams, indigenous peoples became

more impoverished. Many of those who lost their cultures and displaced from their lands have not yet been resettled and even those who were resettled have been placed in the most hostile or infertile lands. It is a common observation that indigenous peoples live in territories richly endowed with natural resources but they remain the poorest of the poor. Chiapas, in Mexico, is an example. It is the main producer of gas and oil, yet most indigenous women cut firewood for cooking. Around 11 million people throughout Mexico live in extreme poverty and the great majority of these are indigenous peoples. The result of a study on poverty of indigenous peoples in Nicaragua represents a typical situation:

> "As a region the Atlantic Coast is exceptionally rich in terms of natural resources. The coasts are teeming with fish, shrimp and lobster; the forests in the RAAN[20] have extensive stands of pine and, to a lesser extent, mahogany and other hardwoods; and there are extensive deposits of minerals (gold, silver, copper and lead), especially along the headwaters of the rivers in the RAAN. Historically, however, extraction of these resources have been capitalized and directed by interests based outside the region, most of whom have had little interest in the long-term development of the Atlantic Coast. The indigenous peoples of the region have consequently had little opportunity to share in the commercial exploitation of this wealth, and gained little in terms of the development of a rationally planned and maintained infrastructure."[21]

25. A similar observation was made by the Asian Development Bank study done in Indonesia.[22] This shows that the richest provinces per capita GDP include East Kalimantan and Irian Jaya, yet the living standards of the population are generally lower in terms of per capita consumption. This transfer and resulting depression of living standards have undoubtedly led to serious discontent and a potentially explosive situation in these provinces.[23]

26. In the present era of globalization, where trade and investment liberalization, deregulation and privatization are the policies followed by most Governments, the face of poverty for many indigenous peoples has changed for the worst. A case study was carried out on how the dumping of cheap imported vegetables, through agricultural liberalization, affected indigenous vegetable farmers in the Philippines: imported vegetables, which came in legally or through the back door, were priced 30 to 50 per cent lower than the local produce. This resulted in a loss of profits and the destruction of the livelihoods of 250,000 farmers and 400 vegetable traders.[24] The affected farmers are still trying to search for alternatives to this livelihood that they depended on for almost 100 years. Because of this crisis, more farmers are shifting to the production of marijuana, even if this is illegal. The cost of one kilo of marijuana can be 100 times more than the cost of one kilo of potatoes.

27. The production of marijuana, coca and opium are now alternative sources of livelihood for some indigenous peoples in countries such as the Philippines, Thailand, Myanmar, Colombia and Venezuela. The destruction of their subsistence production systems by cash cropping or extractive industries has not lifted them out of poverty. With the volatility of commodity prices and the dumping of cheap, highly subsidized agricultural products from foreign countries, the shift to plantation economies and cash cropping has not paid off. Indigenous peoples are planting marijuana or coca to be able to survive the grueling poverty they face. At the same time, indigenous peoples' territories have become highly militarized and

massive violations of their rights are taking place as Governments carry out drug control and anti-terrorism campaigns.

28. The example of coffee production demonstrates the problems of indigenous peoples with the mainstream development model and with the globalization of the market economy. Coffee production for export has been taking place in indigenous communities in Guatemala since the late nineteenth century. Seasonal migration of indigenous peoples to work in coffee farms has been one of their survival strategies. Some indigenous peoples opted to permanently migrate, such as the Q'eqchi and the Poqomchi. This is also the case in Mexico. The profits from coffee are dependent on the exploitation of cheap labour of indigenous peoples, who live in bunkhouses, without privacy or clean water and toilets.

29. When Viet Nam opened up its economy to the world market it built irrigation canals and provided subsidies for farmers to migrate to the central highlands and other upland areas in the 1980s and 1990s. In 1990 it only produced 1.5 million bags of coffee. This increased to a phenomenal 15 million bags in 2000, making Viet Nam the second largest coffee producer in the world. Large tracts of land, including well-preserved forests in the territories of the indigenous peoples/ethnic minorities, were converted to coffee plantations. Most of these are now owned by rich lowlanders based in Saigon. Massive deforestation and environmental devastation resulted from this economic project. The indigenous peoples of Viet Nam were displaced from their lands, owing to the migration of tens of thousands of lowlanders into their communities to engage in coffee production.

30. The overproduction of coffee worldwide brought the prices tumbling down. Among those who suffered the most are indigenous peoples, not only from Viet Nam, but from various parts of the world. Coffee prices dropped from $1,500/ton in 1998 to less than $700/ton in 2000, largely owing to the flooding of Vietnamese coffee onto the world market.[25] This has made it less economical to grow the "black gold" and has slowed the immigration somewhat, yet the problem of land tenure remains. In Mexico, coffee cultivation has been an important source of income for the indigenous communities of Chiapas and Oaxaca. Nationwide, over 70 per cent of coffee farmers have plots of less than two hectares. And in Chiapas, Mexico's most important state for coffee production, 91 per cent of producers have less than five hectares. These coffee farmers now find themselves in extreme poverty. The World Bank says that in Central America 400,000 temporary coffee workers and 200,000 permanent workers lost their jobs after the collapse of the coffee prices.[26]

31. Viet Nam is one of the few countries on track in achieving the Millennium Development Goals. This was achieved, however, at the expense of the indigenous peoples in that country. An anthropologist from Yale University, presenting a paper on Viet Nam in December 2004, concluded that

> "Although the opening of Viet Nam's economy to market forces in the 1980s and 1990s has reduced poverty levels and increased personal freedoms for much of the population, minorities continue to face many hardships ... Most upland ethnic minorities have little benefited from these changes. They suffer from disease, lack clean water, and have low literacy rates and low incomes, despite many government efforts at upland development."[27]

32. Massive protests from indigenous peoples in Viet Nam, never seen in its recent history, took place in 2000 and continue still. The indigenous peoples cut down

coffee trees and replaced these with food crops to meet their immediate food needs.[28] The main demand of the indigenous peoples is for the Government to recognize and secure their land rights.

33. This picture is not unique to Viet Nam. The pastoralist Maasai peoples in Kenya and Tanzania, are faced with similar situations. Their grazing lands are now occupied by settler farmers and have been converted to agricultural lands.[29] The destruction of the pastoralist economy around which their identities and cultures as indigenous peoples revolve is taking place with full complicity of the State and the market.

34. The paradigm of economic growth through trade and investment liberalization, deregulation and privatization has so far resulted in the further impoverishment of indigenous peoples and the disappearance of their knowledge and cultures. Numerous studies on the adverse impacts of this kind of globalization on developing countries have been carried out. The conclusion is that this one-size-fits-all kind of globalization is not appropriate for developing countries. Countries should be given the space to design and implement development policies that will fit their particular economic, social and political context. This recommendation is equally applicable to indigenous peoples. The conflict over different paradigms of development is the central question. The key weakness of the Millennium Development Goals is that it does not question the mainstream development paradigm nor does it address the economic, political, social and cultural structural causes of poverty. Women activists share this analysis.

> "A major problem of the MDGs is their abstraction from the social, political and economic context in which they are to be implemented — the 'political economy' of the MDGs."[30]

35. The approach taken by a country to halve the number of poor and hungry people by 2015 will determine whether indigenous peoples' poverty will be alleviated or not. The path of incurring more debts, engaging in more aggressive extraction of mineral resources, oil, or gas in indigenous peoples' territories, or further liberalizing imports to the detriment of traditional livelihoods would, in all probability, not alleviate poverty among indigenous peoples.

36. The grants or loans provided by intergovernmental development agencies, like the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) or international financial institutions, for government projects implemented in indigenous peoples' territories can help address indigenous peoples' poverty. However, serious evaluation of these is required to assess whether these projects are planned, implemented and evaluated with indigenous peoples, whether they are reinforcing or destroying sustainable resource management systems of indigenous peoples and their traditional systems of reciprocity and collective decision-making, and whether such projects have brought about policy changes in favour of indigenous peoples. The Permanent Forum is presently undertaking a project with the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) to do case studies on such projects, to cull lessons which can be used in the future. The results of these studies will be presented at the forthcoming session of the Permanent Forum for 2005.

37. A more sustainable approach is to deal squarely with the structural causes of poverty by introducing policy and structural reforms, not only at the country level but at the global level as well. There is a lot to learn from the experiences of the

international and regional financial institutions that required debtor countries to create indigenous peoples' development plans (IPDPs) before loans for projects in indigenous peoples' territories are released. How were these plans formulated? What are the lessons learned in terms of their design, planning and implementation? Millennium Development Goal 8, on developing global partnership for development, should look into these questions and issues and elaborate further on how such a partnership with indigenous peoples can be forged. The second International Decade of the World's Indigenous Peoples (2005-2015) falls exactly within the period left for the Millennium Development Goals to be achieved. Interface between these two should be developed.

38. The issue of poverty reduction and economic development cannot be addressed separately from the issues of indigenous identity and worldviews, cultures and indigenous peoples' rights to territories and resources and to self-determination. There is tension, no doubt, between maintaining indigenous identity on one hand and improving economic conditions on the other hand. In a world where improving economic conditions is equated with the growth of market institutions, nationally and globally, many indigenous peoples find themselves in a dilemma. If they participate fully in the market, they have to forget about their customary land tenure systems, their traditional practices of redistributing wealth and ensuring more equitable access to and sharing of resources, and their natural resource management systems.

VII. Free, prior and informed consent

39. It is in this context that it is crucial to obtain the free, prior and informed consent of indigenous peoples before development projects or any policies affecting them are designed and brought to their communities. This is nothing else but respect for the right to participate in decision-making. Indigenous participants in the first session of the Permanent Forum stressed that there should be discussions on how this principle is being developed, promoted, and respected by Governments, intergovernmental bodies and the private sector. On the recommendation of the third session of the Permanent Forum, a workshop on free, prior and informed consent was held in January 2005 and the report will be presented at the Fourth Session.[31]

40. An expert of the United Nations Working Group on Indigenous Populations, Antoanella-Iulia Motoc, and Tebtebba[32] jointly prepared a paper on this, which was presented at the July 2004 Working Group session. The paper highlighted that:

> "Substantively, the principle of free, prior and informed consent recognizes indigenous peoples' inherent and prior rights to their lands and resources and respects their legitimate authority to require that third parties enter into an equal and respectful relationship with them based on the principle of informed consent. Procedurally, free, prior and informed consent requires processes that allow and support meaningful choices by indigenous peoples about their development path."[33]

41. The Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act of the Philippines has clear provisions on free, prior and informed consent. Chapter 2, Section 3g, of the Act defines free and prior informed consent to "mean the consensus of all members of the Indigenous Cultural Communities/Indigenous Peoples to be determined in accordance with their respective customary laws and practices, free from any external manipulation,

interference, coercion, and obtained after fully disclosing the intent and scope of the activity, in a language and process understandable to the community".[34] This law underscores that indigenous peoples have the right to accept or reject a certain development, activity or undertaking in their community.[35] While this law exists, much more needs to be done to have it implemented appropriately. The present efforts to weaken the rules and procedures on this should be stopped.

42. This is one of the most difficult issues for Governments and corporations, and why one of the recommendations from the Permanent Forum Workshop on Free Prior, Informed Consent is that **the Inter-Agency Support Group on Indigenous Issues (IASG), in cooperation with the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, should develop a handbook on indigenous issues, as well as materials on free, prior and informed consent for United Nations country teams' work on the Millennium Development Goals, poverty reduction strategy papers and common country assessment/United Nations Development Assistance Framework. This handbook should be flexible, user-friendly, and should take into account the diversity of interests of the stakeholders in the process of free, prior and informed consent.**[36]

VIII. Recommendations relating to Millennium Development Goal 1

43. The key challenge is to deepen the understanding of poverty in indigenous communities, developing culturally sensitive poverty indicators that can define poverty in terms of unsatisfied basic needs, taking into consideration the nature of traditional subsistence economies. Basic needs are largely satisfied through non-market mechanisms for the redistribution of goods. The primacy given to market mechanisms or state-defined development programmes ignore or destroy the indigenous systems which work best for them.

44. Indigenous peoples have presented some recommendations in various forums, including the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. Some of these are as follows:

- **The Millennium Development Goal reports of countries and intergovernmental bodies should make indigenous peoples visible. The guidelines for reporting, the indicators and the approaches and methods used to achieve the Millennium Development Goals should be made more sensitive to indigenous peoples' situations and perspectives.**
- **Mechanisms and processes that allow indigenous communities, institutions and organizations to play key roles to enrich the debates, design the framework and activities on Millennium Development Goals should be created and enhanced. The indigenous lens should be used to analyse the Millennium Development Goals and recommend ways to make them relevant to indigenous peoples. There is a need to critique and reshape programmes and policies to be more sensitive to indigenous issues.**
- **The human rights-based framework and approach to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, in general, and poverty reduction strategies, in particular, should be adopted and operationalized by Governments, intergovernmental bodies, non-governmental organizations and the private sector. The recognition of indigenous peoples' claims for**

individual and collective rights, as distinct peoples, is crucial for a just and sustainable solution to widespread poverty in their midst.

- **Methodologies and strategies should be developed to research the underlying causes of feminization and indigenization of poverty and develop programmes that effectively address those underlying causes. Systematic needs assessment for indigenous women and their involvement in all phases of the programme cycle should be ensured.**

- **Disaggregated data on indigenous peoples should be collected in all countries where they are found. UNDP, the World Bank and other intergovernmental bodies should include disaggregated data on indigenous men and women in their regular human development and poverty reports.**

- **More in-depth discussions and dialogues among indigenous peoples and between them and Governments, intergovernmental bodies and the broader society should seek to develop further perspectives and recommendations on indigenous development paradigms. These should further develop and popularize concepts such as "ethno-development", "life-projects", "development with identity", etc. Such processes should explore how to address the structural causes of indigenous poverty.**

- **Obtaining the free, prior and informed consent of indigenous peoples should be ensured before any development project or policy that directly affects them are undertaken. Support should be provided for the elaboration by the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues and the Inter-Agency Support Group on Indigenous Issues of a guidebook on free, prior and informed consent.**

- **Indigenous peoples' own institutions should be supported so that they have sufficient funding and capacity to provide contextualized empirical data and monitor their poverty situation; and to ensure they contribute to their own development proposals and fully participate in the planning, design, implementation and monitoring of policies and programmes.**

- **Further, indigenous peoples must be enabled to participate fully in national and international gatherings where issues directly affecting them are being discussed — including environmental agreements, negotiations around global, regional and bilateral trade agreements and debt.**

- **Systematic training on indigenous peoples' rights should be undertaken for staff in intergovernmental bodies, donor agencies, civil servants, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).**

- **Governments should positively contribute to the ongoing process of discussing and defining indigenous rights in forums such as the Organization of American States and the United Nations Commission on Human Rights, and ratify and adequately implement existing instruments for the recognition of indigenous peoples' rights, for example, International Labour Organization Convention No. 169, as well as adopt a universal declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples in the immediate future.**

- **Several pilot countries should be selected to explore the opportunities and risks for indigenous peoples in relation to the poverty reduction strategy papers (PRSP) process.**

IX. Universal primary education

45. Education, for most indigenous peoples, is seen as a way to get out of poverty. However, the rate of illiteracy among indigenous peoples is usually higher than that of the dominant groups. Even the number of indigenous children who go to primary school and finish is much lower. The Organización Nacional Indigena de Colombia[37] revealed that a 1985 census in Colombia showed that there is a 44 per cent illiteracy rate among the country's 64 indigenous ethno-linguistic groups, which is still higher than the 30.6 per cent of illiteracy among the rural population.

46. A World Bank study has also shown that illiteracy remains a problem for some states in Mexico with predominantly indigenous populations. It states that in 1980 illiteracy in Oaxaca was 46 per cent. It dropped to 28 per cent in 1990, but this is still more than twice the national average of 12 per cent. In Chiapas the illiteracy rate in 1990 was 30 per cent.[38] This same study did a survey on the effects of gender and ethnicity on educational attainment in Bolivia. One of the conclusions was "that indigenous individuals were 30 per cent more likely not to have completed primary school than their non-indigenous counterparts".[39] The Asian Development Bank study on indigenous poverty showed that there were significant deviations from the national average of literacy when it comes to indigenous territories.[40] The main causes of the high levels of illiteracy range from sheer lack of schools and teachers, isolated and remote communities, inability to buy school uniforms and school supplies, discrimination and absence of bilingual education, among others. This study clearly established the direct connection between the high incidence of poverty among indigenous peoples and high illiteracy.

47. While education is very important, it can also lead to alienation. There is no question that universal primary education is desirable for indigenous peoples. However, the quality of education has to be looked into. Does universal primary education make indigenous children value their indigenous cultures and norms or does it make them deny their identity or despise their own cultures and tradition? In most cases, indigenous children who enter the school for the first time are traumatized, because they do not understand the language used, they are teased and discriminated against because they speak a strange language or dialect, they are not dressed like the others and they are treated badly by teachers. This explains why there is a high-dropout rate in the first three grades.

48. Acquiring higher education is very difficult for many indigenous people mainly owing to economic constraints. If they finish college or university, the chances that they will return to their ancestral lands lessen.

49. In terms of pedagogical methods, is due consideration given to indigenous teaching and learning approaches? Indigenous worldviews, perspectives and history are absent from textbooks and school curricula. In fact, discriminatory references to indigenous peoples are common. Bilingual intercultural education is a frequent demand by indigenous peoples in most countries. Unfortunately, the general response to this by Governments, whether at the national or international level, is the lack of resources. Nonetheless, in some countries in Latin America like Bolivia,

Ecuador, Colombia and Guatemala, educational reforms are being undertaken that include, among others, bilingual intercultural education.

50. At a consultation held among indigenous peoples of Asia in February 2005, the participants raised the issue of indigenous and tribal children not being able to attend schools because school buildings are occupied by the military or there are no teachers. This is common in communities where armed conflicts are raging. Even in areas where there are no such conflicts, there are still many communities where there are no schools. Since many small groupings of indigenous peoples are found in the most inaccessible areas, Governments are reluctant to invest in schools for them. With the increasing push to privatize education, schooling for indigenous peoples becomes an even more remote prospect.

X. Recommendations relating to Millennium Development Goal 2

51. Some of the recommendations relating to this issue are the following:

- **Indigenous education (formal or non-formal) must be based on indigenous peoples' worldviews. Bilingual education should be arranged for the first three grades of primary school, at least.**
- **Education materials must be purged of discriminatory contents and erroneous historical accounts that make indigenous peoples invisible and misrepresent them should be rectified.**
- **Curriculum development should be adapted to local contexts of indigenous peoples. It must be a tool that prepares them and gives them the choice to enter the formal system and/or function effectively in their own communities. There should be opportunities given to indigenous elders to come and teach in the schools, whether this is at the elementary or secondary levels.**
- **Curricula for primary and secondary schools should reflect the insights and usefulness of indigenous knowledge systems and reflect indigenous values. Indigenous pedagogies that are informed by stories, values, practices and ways of knowing indigenous peoples should be developed and integrated into education programmes.**
- **Indigenous education must provide alternative learning paths that respect and utilize indigenous learning systems that meet basic needs, such as identity, resource control and self-determination.**
- **Mobile schools for semi-nomadic, nomadic and pastoralist indigenous peoples should be set up.**
- **Resources should be made available to indigenous peoples to set up their own education systems, including schools, should they choose to do so.**

XI. Conclusion

52. This paper has mainly focused on the concerns and perspectives of indigenous peoples primarily from developing countries. It is intended to promote discussions

and future projects that will analyse the issues in more depth. It is my hope that it will also challenge Governments, intergovernmental bodies and NGOs to see whether their approaches in achieving the Millennium Development Goals are sensitive to indigenous peoples. The human-rights based approach to development is essential to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

53. The Inter-agency Support Group on Indigenous Issues held its annual meeting in September 2004, at which a statement was made on Millennium Development Goals:

> "... as the 2005 review of the implementation of the MDGs nears, it appears from available evidence that indigenous and tribal peoples are lagging behind other parts of the population in the achievement of the goals in most, if not all, the countries in which they live, and indigenous and tribal women commonly face additional gender-based disadvantages and discrimination ... Concern has also been expressed that the effort to meet the targets laid down for MDGs could in fact have harmful effects for indigenous and tribal peoples, such as the acceleration of the loss of the lands and natural resources or the displacement from those lands."

54. In light of the situation of indigenous peoples, as partially presented in this paper, Governments, the United Nations, other intergovernmental bodies and NGOs would be well advised to look closely at their policies and programmes on indigenous peoples. The different perspectives and recommendations offered by indigenous peoples provide new challenges, especially in rethinking mainstream development. States should reconsider development frameworks and policies that have negatively affected indigenous peoples and should espouse different ones that will effectively face the challenges posed by the situations and visions of indigenous peoples. The remaining 11 years can make a difference in changing the poverty situation of indigenous peoples. The role which the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues will play in bringing these changes is crucial.

Notes

[1] E/CN.4/2003/90, para. 28.

[2] Psacharopoulos, George and Harry Anthony Patrinos, eds., *Indigenous People and Poverty in Latin America: An Empirical Analysis* (Washington, D.C., The World Bank, 1994), p. xviii.

[3] Plant, Roger, *Issues in Indigenous Poverty and Development* (Washington, D.C., IADB, 1998).

[4] Luis Hernandez Navarro, "Indigenous Poverty and Social Mobilization", in *The Poverty of Rights: Human Rights and the Eradication of Poverty*, Willem van Genugten and Camilo Perez-Bustillo, eds. (London, Zed Books, 2001), pp. 116-117.

[5] Birgitte Feiring, *Indigenous Peoples and Poverty: The cases of Bolivia, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua* (London, Minority Rights Group, 2004).

[6] http://www.socialwatch.org/en/informes/Nacionales/365.html-ftn_5, downloaded 13 January 2005.

[7] International IDEA, Women in Parliament (Stockholm, 2002) (http://www.idea.int). English translation of Nina Pacari, "La participation politica de la mujer en el Congreso Ecuatoriano. Una taria pendiente".

[8] UNICEF News Note, November 2003.

[9] Ethnic minorities is still a term used in Viet Nam. However, some of these people self-identify as indigenous peoples.

[10] Huynh Thu Ba, Duong Buh Hanh, Bui The Coung, *Indigenous Peoples/Ethnic Minorities and Poverty Reduction: Viet Nam* (Manila, Asian Development Bank, 2002), p. 17.

[11] Rovillos, Raymundo and Daisy Morales, *Philippines* (Manila, ADB, 2002), p. 19.

[12] Roger Plant, *Issues in Indigenous Poverty and Development* (Washington, D.C., Inter-American Development Bank, 1998), p. 14.

[13] Victoria Tauli Corpuz and Joji Carino, eds., Reclaiming Balance (Tebtebba, 2003).

[14] *Terra nullius* means "lands unoccupied before European settlement". This was used in Australia by the colonizers to justify their exploitation and occupation of indigenous peoples territories.

[15] The Regalian Doctrine dates back to the arrival of Spaniards in the Philippines when they declared all lands in the country as belonging to the King of Spain. The 1987 Philippine Constitution affirms this doctrine in Sec. 2, Article XII, which says, "All lands of the public domain, waters, mineral oils, all sources of potential energy, fisheries, forests or timber, wildlife, flora and fauna and other natural resources are owned by the State."

[16] Brandon Yoder, *Indigenous People and Oil Production in Ecuador's Oriente*, Fourth World Journal, vol. 5, No. 1 (2002), Center for World's Indigenous Studies, p. 80.

[17] Camilo Perez-Bustillo. "Human Rights, Poverty and Indigenous Peoples' Struggles in the Americas", in *The Poverty of Rights*, Willem van Genugten and Camilo Perez-Bustillo, eds. (London, Zed Books, 2001), p. 90.

[18] *Human Development Report 2004*.

[19] E/C.19/2004/2, para. 34 (4).

[20] RAAN means Región Autónoma del Atlántico Norte.

[21] Mark Jamieson, *Poverty Among Indigenous Peoples in Nicaragua* (Washington, D.C., Inter-American Development Bank, 1999), p. 8.

[22] *Assessment of Poverty in Indonesia* (Manila, Asian Development Bank, 2000).

[23] Roger Plant, *Indigenous Peoples/Ethnic Minorities and Poverty Reduction: Regional Report* (Manila, Asian Development Bank, 2002), p. 30. In Indonesia the people who self-identify as indigenous are the Dayaks of East Kalimantan and the various groups in Irian Jaya. Safitri, Myrna and Rafael Edy Bosko, *Indigenous Peoples/Ethnic Minorities and Poverty Reduction: Indonesia*, (Manila, Asian Development Bank, 2002).

[24] Victoria Tauli Corpuz and Ruth Batani-Sidchogan, *Impact of Trade Liberalization on the Rural Poor: Philippine Case Study*, presented at the twenty-seventh IFAD Board of Governors Meeting in Rome on 18 February 2004.

[25] Agence France Press, 2000.

[26] Quoted from *Mugged: Poverty in your Coffee Cup*, (Oxfam International, 2002), p. 14.

[27] Pamela D. McElwee, "Ethnic Minorities in Viet Nam: Are Trends toward Globalization, Regionalism, and Nationalism in Southeast Asia Hurting or Helping Them?", presented at the Conference on "Globalization and Ethnic Minorities", Chiangmai, December 2004.

[28] Asian Development Bank. Indigenous Peoples/Ethnic Minorities and Poverty Reduction: Viet Nam (2002), p. 25.

[29] Discussion with Naomi Kipuri, a Maasai anthropologist and member of the African Working Group on Indigenous Populations and Communities of the African Commission on Peoples' and Human Rights of the African Union.

[30] Paper presented by Peggy Antrobus at the UNDP Caribbean Regional Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) Conference to the Working Group on Millennium Development Goals and

Gender Equity, July 2003.

[31] E/C.19/2005/3.

[32] Tebtebba is an indigenous organization, also known as the Indigenous Peoples' International Centre for Policy Advocacy and Education, and it is based in the Philippines.

[33] E/CN.4/Sub.2/AC.4/2004/48. This can be downloaded from www.tebtebba.org.

[34] For more information on this law: www.ncip.gov.ph.

[35] Section 6 of Chapter 1 on Preliminary Provisions of NCIP A.O. 3 Series of 2002.

[36] E/C.19/2005/3.

[37] The Organización Nacional Indigena de Colombia (ONIC) is a national federation of indigenous peoples' organizations in Colombia.

[38] George Psacharopoulos, et al., (1994), p. 140.

[39] Ibid.

[40] Roger Plant, *Indigenous Peoples/Ethnic Minorities and Poverty Reduction: Regional Report*, (Manila, Asian Development Bank, 2002).